been allowed to get the revised scale w.e.f. 11th June 1987;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for this discrimination;

(d) whether Government propose to allow revised scale to non-Gazetted staff also w.e.f. 1st January, 1986 and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Non-Gazetted ministerial staff of CRPF was combatised in 1981 and since then they were allowed civilian scales of pay. The decision to allow them the scales of pay as for non-gazetted executive ranks was taken in June, 1987 and these scales were therefore allowed to them with effect from the date of issue of the sanction i.e. 11-6-87.

(d) and (e) The question of giving effect to and the new scales of pay to ministerial combatised staff from 1st January, 1986 is under consideration.

Port Blair as a Free Port

2744. DR. C. SILVERA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to declare Port Blair as a free port;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) to (c) Some suggestions have been received for the development of a free port in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. No decision has been taken on the proposal which requires to be evaluated in depth having regard to various issues.

Shortage of application forms in the Regional Passport Office, Ahmedabad

2745. SHRI RAMSINGHBHAI PATALIYABHAI RATHVAKOLI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that application forms for new Passports and for renewal were not available in the recent past in the Regional Passport Office at Ahmedabad;

(b) if so, what remedial steps have been taken in this regard;

(c) how many such forms were supplied to this office during the last three years, year-wise and out of it how many were made available to the general public and Agents;

(d) whether it is a fact that in the past private parties could print such forms and they were accepted; and

(e) if so, what remedial steps have allowed again to overcome the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) 2,85,000 forms were suplied to Regional Passport Office, Ahmedabad since October 1986 to the present date. Before this there was no system in existence of centralised printing and distribution of forms. Therefore, no statistics exist for previous periods.

Out of these 77,243 forms have so far been given to the general public and travel agents.